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FITNESS REPORT

A GUIDE FOR COMPLETING FITNESS REPORTS (PERFORMANCE) AND (POTENTIAL)

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A GUIDE FOR COMPLETING FITNESS REPORTS (PERFORMANCE) AND (POTENTIAL)

This Handbook is for the guidance of supervisors and administrative officials in completing Fitness Reports. General policy and procedural guidance is provided in [REDACTED] Fitness Report, and on the Fitness Report Forms.

Forward

1. WHAT IS A FITNESS REPORT?

a. A Fitness Report is a form for recording the opinion of a supervisor about the work performance, suitability for employment, and potential of a subordinate. The Report is only one element in the general evaluations which are constantly being made of employees. Reports which are prepared carefully will be extremely valuable for consideration in connection with the development of career plans and the review of personnel actions. On the other hand, Reports which do not fairly reflect the individual's performance and potential may lead to personnel actions which are detrimental to the individual, the supervisor, and to the Organization.

b. Fitness Reports will be of primary interest to two groups. Employees, being rated or evaluated, are rightfully interested because of their natural desire to know where they stand with their supervisor(s). It is the policy of this Organization to support this right of the individual. It is also clear that management requires information on personnel performance and potential. The Report is designed so that both of these interests are met through differentiating between the evaluation of job performance—the subject of particular concern to the employee and his immediate supervisor, and the evaluation of potential—the subject of particular interest to

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and therefore reports
secondary levels of supervision and to career service elements. Opinions concerning an individual's performance or potential can ~~and will~~ differ legitimately. ~~Hence reports prepared by different supervisors on the same individual(s) will differ.~~ All that is required is that each supervisor give his honest opinion after carefully observing his subordinate in action. Over a period of time the series of reports prepared by several different supervisors will provide a progressively more accurate evaluation of the individual concerned.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE NEW FITNESS REPORT

The initial evaluation system in the Organization was the Personnel Evaluation Report (PER) introduced in 1952. It was superseded by the first Fitness Report which was introduced on an experimental basis in November 1954, ~~and was~~ designed to provide a Report more suitable for selection purposes. With ~~the~~ *the* introduction *of the Fitness Report*, plans were laid for continuing study of the evaluation program. The study was largely concerned with finding out what supervisors at all levels wanted in a fitness report. This approach recognizes the controversial nature of fitness reporting, there being almost as many opinions about it as there are people. ~~Dis-~~
~~covering~~ ~~that~~ a majority wanted and how the majority were using the then current report became the basis for the present change. Specific steps in the development were as follows:

- a. Analysis of the replies of supervisors *to* the questionnaire circulated about the November 1954 Fitness Report.
- b. Analysis of the content of completed Fitness Reports and statistical studies pertaining thereto.

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c. Interviews with Operating Officials, administrative officers, supervisors and personnel officers throughout the Organization concerning this subject.

d. Development of a revised Fitness Report, reflecting the findings that had been arrived at, in order to provide a basis for further discussions.

e. Submission of this proposed revision to a number of operating officials, administrative officers, supervisors and personnel officers, from all components, in a series of meetings for pro and con discussions concerning all aspects of evaluation reporting. Each group spent much time in analyzing and discussing the ^{proposed} Report, suggested changes, and the policies and procedures which should govern its use.

f. The draft of the Fitness Report revision was further, and quite markedly altered as a result of these meetings and presented ^{to} a task force of the Career Council especially appointed for this purpose.

g. The ^{second} revision was ~~also~~ ^{then} submitted to the operating and administrative officials to be sure the substance of their criticisms and recommendations had been incorporated.

h. When general agreement was indicated, the proposed Fitness Report revision was recommended to the Career Council by the task force. The Council adopted the revised Report.

3. THE TWO PARTS OF THE FITNESS REPORT FORM

Job performance and ~~employee~~ potential were the two points emphasized

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during discussions with makers and users of fitness reports. The revisions reflect this emphasis. The emphasis on job performance fits in with the

individual's right to know how he is doing; the emphasis on potential *fits in* ~~with~~ with an organization's right to obtain information permitting

effective and fair planning. The two uses of the Report are differentiated *with* and put into separate parts of the form to permit the application of the *(Part I Performance and Part II Potential)* different policies appropriate to the purposes in each case.

- a. ~~The Fitness Report~~ *Part I - Performance* is designed to elicit the supervisor's opinion concerning the on-the-job performance of the individual. It is concerned with the productivity *and* quality of performance of the employee on the job ~~in which~~ he is performing. ~~Excerpt~~ *by the supervisor*

~~under the limited circumstances cited below, it is Organization policy~~ *after completion* that the employee has the right to see this part ~~and know how he is~~

~~performing~~ Pursuant to paragraph 2b(1) of the Regulation

the supervisor may elect not to show ~~this part of~~ the Report, ~~other~~ *unless it* ~~than a Report~~ supporting an adverse action, ~~when one or more of the~~

~~following conditions prevail:~~

- (1) When there exists unusual operational circumstances such as those at a small station where the rater and individual being evaluated are working and living in very close proximity and constant social interchange between them is necessary?

Under the limited circumstances cited below, however

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- (2) When, for medical or psychological reasons, it would be illadvised to show the individual the report;
- (3) When security considerations preclude showing the report;
- (4) When the supervisor and individual being rated are so physically separated that it is impractical to show the report.

When the supervisor elects not to show the Report to the individual being rated, for one or more of the above reasons, he shall give the reasons for his action in Section B of Part I. The individual may subsequently be shown the report by the head of his Career Service upon request, security considerations permitting. Suggestions for the conduct of the discussion or interview which will accompany the showing of the Report are given in paragraph 5, below.

- b. ~~The Fitness Report~~ ^{Part II - Potential} is designed to provide operating officials and personnel officers with an opinion concerning the potential of the employee. Such information is necessary if due consideration is to be given the employee in assignments, promotions, selection for membership in the Career ~~Staff~~ ^{Staff} and other actions affecting ^{his} ~~the~~ status, ~~of the individual~~. This part of the Report seeks to provide management with the type of information it should have to ~~properly~~ use and develop personnel. ~~This~~ ^{prescribes that this part} Organization policy that ~~it~~ WILL NOT BE SHOWN to the individual being rated.

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4. GUIDANCE FOR ~~RATING OFFICERS IN~~ COMPLETING THE FITNESS REPORT (PART I - PERFORMANCE) *of*

SECTION A. GENERAL

All ten items of this section should be completed accurately and use should be made of official records, as necessary. Special instructions for completing this part of the Report in the Foreign Field should be carefully observed.

SECTION B. CERTIFICATION

Item 1. For the Rater - The supervisor rating a subordinate should refer to *paragraph 3a above* ~~for RFP 370, Fitness Report~~, for guidance concerning exceptions to the policy of showing ~~or not showing~~ Part I of the Report to the subordinate.

Sub-Item A - The last statement of this part of the certification is not to be confused with Item 1. Item 1 will be used to indicate whether ~~or not~~ the individual being rated was shown *Part I of the* the completed Report (~~Part I~~). The final statement of *Sub-Item* Item A should be checked when circumstances (e.g., physical separation, *by the supervisor* ~~may~~) have ~~been such that the supervisor has not~~ *presented discussion or communication* discussed, or not communicated, with the employee about his job performance.

Sub-Item B - *Part I of* "This Date" is the date the Report is signed by the supervisor.

Sub-Items C and D - Self explanatory. Note special instructions for use in the Foreign Field.

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Item 2. For the Reviewing Official - *in paragraph 8,* See instructions provided below, for the Reviewing Official.

Sub-Item A - *part I D* This ~~date~~ is the date the Report is signed by the Reviewing Official.

Sub-Items B and C - Self explanatory. Note special instructions for use in the Foreign Field.

SECTION C. JOB PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Item 1. Rating on General Performance of Duties - *The supervisor's* ~~For~~ rating of the employee in this section should be based exclusively on his productivity on the job, meaning the quality and quantity of his work performance. It may very well be that he is potentially worth more to the Organization in another capacity or that he is very pleasant to have around or that he is in some ways a distracting influence in the office - but he must be rated on how well and how rapidly he accomplishes his assignments. Other factors are reflected later in the Report.

Item 1. COMMENTS - Add ~~what~~ clarifying comments ~~you can~~ concerning his performance in getting the work accomplished. *The supervisor's* ~~For~~ opinion of his productivity is wanted.

Item 2. Ratings on Performance of Specific Duties - It is rare that two jobs, even those identically classified, are exactly the same in all respects. In this part of the Report *the supervisor has* you have the opportunity to spell out, preferably in the order of their importance, the actual functions of the job being performed by the individual being rated. In ~~the previous~~ *the supervisor* Item 1, you indicated an overall rating for the performance of this individual. In this item *he* you should determine

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the employee
the functions ~~he~~ performs, list them, and rate each one separately.
For example: Two stenographers are working for the same supervisor. One has the special duty of managing a filing system, the other of serving as office receptionist. At least one function of each of these would be different and the employees would be rated according to the manner in which they perform such functions. Furthermore, supervisors will find that they expect different things from subordinates in terms of such factors as length of service, age, experience, etc. These conditions are reflected in the assignments given individuals and should be reflected in the rating applied in this section. Very careful consideration should be given this section because it is an important basis for evaluation of the employee for future assignments. For ~~you~~ *the supervisor* it will form the main basis of the interview with the employee concerning his performance.

Item 3. Narrative Description of Manner of Job Performance - Do not essentially repeat the opinion ~~you have~~ expressed in Item 2 above. *the supervisor should* Instead, stress the strengths or weaknesses of the employee. ~~that have been apparent to you which you perhaps tend to use or avoid in assigning work to him.~~ *the supervisor may* In addition, ~~you should~~ comment here on any extenuating circumstances (family problems, outside distractions, etc.) which ~~may affect~~ the productivity of the employee.

SECTION D. SUITABILITY FOR CURRENT JOB IN ORGANIZATION

As opposed to the ratings ~~you have~~ given the employee in the preceding section of the Report - this part ~~should be~~ *is* used to evaluate or express *the supervisor's* ~~your~~ opinion of the employee in an overall manner as it applies in his

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work. For example: An employee may not be highly productive but he may be good for the team; he works well with others; he is useful in many ways not directly associated with productivity or his assignments. Conversely, the employee may be a great producer but his work is done at the expense of teamwork, i.e., he disrupts harmony, does not fully cooperate, etc. In short, sum it up. The question following this section concerning "suitability for some other position" should be considered and answered regardless of the nature of the previous ratings if the supervisor has a sound recommendation based on the experience and interests of the employee.

5. SUGGESTIONS FOR THE INTERVIEW WITH THE EMPLOYEE WHEN SHOWING HIM THE FORM

~~IT IS~~ ^{IS} A CENTRAL AND INESCAPABLE ELEMENT OF A SUPERVISOR'S JOB TO EVALUATE HIS SUBORDINATES, CONVEY HIS EVALUATION TO THEM, AND HELP THEM DEVELOP AND IMPROVE.

This is a continuous responsibility and is not adequately discharged by the single interview at fitness reporting time. Fitness reporting time, however, does provide a convenient time for a general review of an employee's performance.

This discussion is one of the most important parts of the fitness reporting procedure. Like any other interview, the skill with which it is conducted

will increase with the care the supervisor takes in planning for it. ^{In} Looking over Part I (Performance) of the Fitness Report ~~form~~, ^{with the employee} it is probably fairly

~~evident that when you show the report to the individual being rated, the most likely source of the resulting discussion will be Section C2 where you rate~~ ^{his performance}

~~him on his performance of the functions of his job. It follows, therefore, that in determining the items to be rated in Section C2, that you are also~~ ^{is rated.} ^{the supervisor is}

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providing ^{himself} ~~yourself~~ with a basis for the interview. The thought the supervisor puts into completion of this section, the care with which he marshals current illustrations to back up his ratings, and the ingenuity he spends in thinking up specific suggestions for the employee will make a great deal of difference on how the interview goes. If the interview goes badly, morale of the employee suffers. If a supervisor has any doubt about his ability to deal with the interview in a specific instance, he should consult with his supervisor.

a. General Suggestion

Having the employee participate in the determination of the elements to be rated in Section C2 is one ~~best~~ ^{good} method of getting the interview off to a start. Such a discussion will clarify for the employee what is and has been expected ~~of him, and will lay a basis for the interview~~ ^{of}. This discussion could be held at the time the report is completed, with the employee seeing what is entered on the form. Preferably, it should be held in advance of fitness reporting time so that the employee will know on what specific duties he is going to be primarily evaluated. Supervisors must be prepared to yield a point if the employee can produce evidence that the supervisor has overlooked. But, supervisors must also be prepared to maintain their judgement when the employee has nothing but a generalized opinion not supported by specifics.

b. Specific Suggestions ^{for Supervisors}

- (1) Prepare for the interview. Have specific and current illustrations at hand to show ~~why you arrived at your evaluation.~~ ^{how the} ~~was arrived at.~~
- (2) Be sure the employee understands the purpose of the interview.
- (3) Begin the discussion of how the individual rates with a good point, if at all possible. Try to give at least as much credit as criticism.

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- (4) Encourage the employee to talk. Listen to him. Schedule the interview so there is no need to hurry through it. Remember the attitude the employee develops at this interview will affect both him and ^{the supervisor} you for some time to come.
- (5) In discussing weaknesses:
- (a) Be prepared with current illustrations of them.
 - (b) Be prepared with suggestions for improvement.
 - (c) Avoid ~~weaknesses~~ ^{those} the employee can do nothing about, unless ^{they are} ~~such weakness is critical, e.g.,~~ ^{important} ~~need for change in assignment~~ ^{those which indicate} or release because of this weakness.
 - (d) Keep the discussion oriented around a comparison of the ^{performance} of the employee with what you ~~expect from him.~~ ^{is expected of him.}
 - (e) Avoid making specific comparisons ^{between the employee being rated and} with others during the discussion, since it may only lead to gossip in the unit and subsequent morale problems.
- (6) Close the interview on a positive note such as encouraging the employee to make suggestions on what he should do during the next rating period, or what ^{the supervisor} ~~you~~ could do to make his job better, or a summary of what ^{the employee and supervisor have talked about.} ~~you have talked about.~~
- (7) Adapt these suggestions to your own personality and manner of dealing with your employees. Interviews in which a supervisor is clearly not behaving naturally are not usually successful.
- (8) Should any question arise concerning Part II, the supervisor should state that policy forbids him to show Part II. If the employee continues to press the discussion, ^{he} ~~you~~ should refer ^{he} ~~him~~ ^{at} to ^{the} ~~your~~ supervisor for further information. ^{next line.}

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6. GUIDANCE IN COMPLETING THE FITNESS REPORT (PART II - POTENTIAL) 8

SECTION E. General

All ~~tap~~ items of this section should be completed accurately and use should be made of official records, as necessary. Special instructions for completing this part of the Report in the Foreign Field should be carefully observed.

SECTION F. Certification

Item 1. For the Rater - Insert the date the report is signed in Sub-Item A. Sub-Items B and C are self explanatory. Note special instructions for use in the Foreign Field.

Item 2. For the Reviewing Official - Insert the date the report is signed in Sub-Item A. Sub-Items B and C are self explanatory. Note special instructions for use in the Foreign Field.

SECTION G. Estimate of Potential

Item 1. Potential to Assume Greater Responsibilities - Consideration should be given to the increased responsibilities that would accrue if the individual is to assume a position in the normal line of progression. In some cases, this means additional responsibilities within the same line of work requiring perhaps only greater self direction or increased knowledge of the work. In other instances it may involve additional ~~or different~~ functions ~~or different ones~~, such as supervision over others, planning, etc.

Item 2. Supervisory Potential - Here ~~you are~~ ^{the supervisor is} asked for the best opinion ~~you~~ ^{he} can give. For employees who have not been in a supervisory position, the estimate should take into account any aptitude (or lack

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of it) which may have been shown by the employee, for example: in his giving on-the-job instruction to others; in his getting the cooperation of the clerks or typists; or in his assumption of leadership in tasks assigned to a small group of which he is a member. If ~~you have had~~ ^{the supervisor has had} no chance to evaluate such actions on the part of the individual, ~~you~~ ^{he} will have to rate the employee on ~~your~~ ^{his} best guess as to how he might respond in a supervisory position, using as a guide ~~his~~ ^{the employees} acceptance by others in a group as evidence of personal leadership, and his ability to organize and carry through his own work.

Item 3. Comments Concerning Potential - Add here any further remarks or clarification concerning ~~your~~ ^{the} opinion of the employee's potential, ~~you~~ ^{wish to make.}

SECTION H. Future Plans

Item 1. Training or other Developmental Experience Planned or Recommended for the Individual - Include plans for on-the-job training, developmental rotation assignments, formal internal and external training and other plans which may be incorporated in career planning.

Item 2. Note other Factors,... - While on the basis of experience, training and other factors an individual may have varying degrees of potential, this potential is affected by other circumstances which may permanently or only temporarily condition his potential, such as family illness. Please note such here.

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SECTION I. Description of Individual

This section requires a very critical analysis on the part of the supervisor. Each factor should be carefully considered. It is best to try to think of concrete examples in each case as the rating is applied. Remember that it is a rare case when an individual does not vary widely in ^{as many} ~~so many~~ factors such as these, ~~covering his behavior~~. Approach each factor separately, without relation to others, and apply a rating. This section is a good test of the supervisor's ability to observe his subordinates.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RATER

Fitness Reports can be no better than the honesty and objectivity of the individual who makes them. They simply represent recorded opinions. The opinions represent the evaluation every supervisor makes during the conduct of his job.

One of the important elements in a supervisory job is the ability to make and report accurately such judgments. The supervisor has the dual responsibility of (1) reporting ~~upwards~~ ^{so they} his judgments to ~~his superior~~ ^{his superior} ~~and~~ ^{can be made} ~~management~~ better decisions, and (2) ~~the~~ communicating to his subordinates his judgments to help him do his job better.

Since Fitness Reports are merely recorded opinion, they are not infallible. Standards of job performance differ, interpretation of words differ, ability to judge others differ. There is no reason for two people to inevitably agree in reporting about the performance and potential of an individual, ~~nor~~ is there any reason why supervisors cannot change their

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opinion as they observe the individual longer. Hence, successive reports from the same supervisor ^{may be} ~~are actually~~ expected to differ.

What can be expected from a rater under these circumstances? Basically, an honest attempt to record an opinion arrived at as objectively as he knows how. When in doubt about how to rate, make an effort to get more facts, more observations. Of one thing we are certain - attempts on the part of a supervisor to guess what standards ^{and} others will use, to influence action by deliberately rating high, can only result, in the long run, in ^{increase} ~~more~~ errors in personnel actions ~~than~~ ~~would otherwise take place~~ and less efficient work on the part of the Organization. Over-rating out of a general feeling of kindness is one of the most difficult matters for a rater to control. He should consider the following:

a. It is no real favor to an employee to overrate him because:

(1) Such evaluations often lead to assignments of duties and responsibilities which the individual cannot master.

(2) It may very well obscure the fact that additional training for the individual would be desirable.

(3) It merely tends to put off a supervisory problem which should be met as the employee develops his work habits and practices.

b. Of even greater importance, perhaps, is the fact that overrating some individuals is unfair to those doing as good or

^{or better} ~~than~~ There is a limit to the upper ranges of a rating

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scale and to the extent individuals are overrated, the upper end of the scale becomes less meaningful in those cases ^{where the rating} ~~when it~~ is actually ^{justified} ~~needed~~.

8. THE ROLE OF THE REVIEWING OFFICIAL

Reviewer

Primarily, the reviewing official has the responsibility of deciding for himself whether the supervisor is either ^{rating} under or overrating the employee concerned. Reviewing officials should recognize that their frame of reference concerning an employee with whom they may have contact only occasionally is different from that of the rating supervisor who normally is in constant contact with the individual. On the other hand, ^{the Reviewing Official} ~~he~~ should be better able to rate the ability of the supervisor to rate his subordinates, one of the major functions in his evaluation of the supervisor. Reviewing officials are specifically asked not to require supervisors to re-write Fitness Reports with which ^{the Reviewing} ~~they~~ do not agree. Instead, the proper procedure for the reviewing official is to add to the Report, in the space provided, his comments on the rating given by the supervisor. The evaluation provided by the supervisor should be his own opinion. It is stressed that some disagreement between rater and reviewer is normal and expected.

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